

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EA-06 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02

OPIC-03 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 STR-04 CEA-01

INT-05 FEA-01 NEA-09 A-01 CPR-01 /118 W

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R 151230Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6429

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 0730

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (DAVIS, NATHANIEL), PFOR, XA, GB

SUBJ: TRAVEL OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY DAVIS: MEETING WITH
BONGO.

1. SUMMARY. PRESIDENT BONGO MET WITH AND HOSTED DINNER
FOR DAVIS MAY 14. PRESIDENT STRESSED HIS DESIRE FOR
U.S. INVESTMENT AND OTHER U.S. INTEREST IN GABON,
EXPRESSING APPRECIATION FOR PAST ASSISTANCE AND PRESENT
INVOLVEMENT. HE ALSO REPEATED HIS DESIRE TO MAKE
OFFICIAL VISIT TO U.S. AND TALKED ABOUT UPCOMING VISIT
TO ROMANIA, NORTH KOREA, PRC, ETC. END SUMMARY.

2. ASSISTANT SECRETARY DAVIS AND AMBASSADOR MADE CALL
ON GABONESE PRESIDENT BONGO, FOLLOWED BY DINNER HOSTED
BY PRESIDENT MAY 14 AT HIS LIBREVILLE RESIDENCE FEW
HOURS BEFORE BONGO DEPARTED FOR PARIS TO BE PRESENT AT
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OPERATION OF MEMBER OF HIS FAMILY.

3. BONGO'S MAJOR POINT WAS THAT HE CONSIDERED U.S. A FRIEND BASED ON PAST PERFORMANCE AND THAT HE WISHED U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN HIS COUNTRY TO CONTINUE TO INCREASE, FOR REASONS OF QUALITY OF U.S. WORK AS WELL AS FOR DIVERSIFICATION FROM GABON'S RELATIONSHIP WITH FRANCE. HE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR U.S. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ROLE IN DEVELOPMENT OF GABON, MENTIONING SPECIFICALLY TRANSGABON RAILROAD, SALE OF AIRCRAFT, EFFORTS OF U.S. COMPANIES, INCLUDING BETHLEHEM STEEL, GULF, AND UNION CARBIDE, AND U.S. ENGINEERING FOR SANTA CLARA MINERAL PORT.

4. HE STATED THAT AMERICAN INVESTMENT FITTED WELL INTO HIS COUNTRY'S POLICY OF QUOTE ECONOMIC LIBERALISM UNQUOTE AND THAT U.S. COMPANIES COULD BE SURE OF CONTINUED POLITICAL STABILITY WITH ASSURANCES OF RIGHT TO TAKE PROFITS, FREE OF NATIONALIZATION. HE URGED U.S. INVESTORS TO NOW LOOK AT POSSIBILITIES OF SMALL INDUSTRIES FOR GABON. AT SAME TIME, HE AFFIRMED OPENNESS OF GABONESE ECONOMY TO ALL FOREIGN INVESTORS. (QUOTE MONEY HAS NO SMELL UNQUOTE).

5. BONGO CHARACTERIZED U.S.-GABONESE RELATIONS SINCE HE BECAME PRESIDENT AS EXCELLENT, EXPRESSING HIGHEST PRAISE FOR AMBASSADOR MCKESSON, SOON DEPARTING. HE RECALLED THAT U.S. WAS FIRST NATION AFTER FRANCE TO OPEN EMBASSY IN LIBREVILLE AT INDEPENDENCE, THAT GOG HAD NEVER HAD TO ARREST AN AMERICAN CITIZEN (IN CONTRADISTINCTION TO ARRESTS OF FRENCH CITIZENS), AND PRAISED ATTRACTIVE TERMS OFFERED BY U.S. LENDERS.

6. RECALLING FONDLY HIS PREVIOUS PRIVATE VISITS TO U.S., HE THEN TURNED TO TOPIC OF POSSIBLE OFFICIAL VISIT TO U.S. HE SAID HIS SCHEDULE IN COMING MONTHS INCLUDED OFFICIAL VISITS TO ROMANIA, NORTH KOREA, PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, JAPAN, AND SOUTH KOREA AND THAT HE HAD INVITATIONS FROM IRAN, QATAR, KUWAIT, AND BAHREIN. HE MENTIONED PAST SERVICES TO U.S., INCLUDING INTERMEDIARY ROLE WITH CONGO (BRAZZAVILLE) OVER POSSIBLE RESTORATION OF NORMAL U.S.-
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CONGO RELATIONS. HE DWELT ON JOYS OF DISNEYLAND, WHERE ONE COULD FORGET PRESIDENCY AND BE QUOTE SANS SOUCI UNQUOTE. IN RESPONSE, DAVIS STATED HE WOULD BEAR IN MIND BONGO'S DESIRE FOR OFFICIAL VISIT, NOTING, HOWEVER, THAT ZAMBIAN PRESIDENT KAUNDA'S RECENT VISIT WAS NOT OFFICIAL, THAT OFFICIAL VISITS WERE VERY DIFFICULT TO ARRANGE, AND THAT PRESIDENT FORD'S SCHEDULE WAS ESSENTIALLY FULL FOR REST OF THIS YEAR AT LEAST.

7. BONGO CLOSED MEETING ON UPBEAT NOTE BY SAYING HE LIKED AMERICANS BECAUSE THEY TALKED STRAIGHT. INQUIRING OF AMBASSADOR STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN GOG AND FIRST NATIONAL CITY BANK OF N.Y. (FNCB) REGARDING ESTABLISHMENT OF BRANCH IN LIBREVILLE AND LEARNING THAT PAPERWORK HAD NOT YET BEEN COMPLETED, HE FIRED ORDER TO ONE OF HIS AIDES TO TELL FINANCE MINISTER THAT PRESIDENT HAD ALREADY AGREED AND TO DISPENSE WITH QUOTE COLONIAL BUREAUCRACY UNQUOTE.
MCKESSON

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